

Record

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Motivated students prepare for service

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Over 140 students from across Mississippi attended the Baptist Student Union (BSU) Summer Missions Orientation on April 5-6 at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian.

Their orientation notebook stated, "This summer will be a challenge for you. Your faith will be tested in more ways than you could ever dream."

Several of the students had already come to that conclusion.

Robertson was one of 34 international summer missionaries, the balance serving in the U.S. John Cartwright, a student from East Central Community College, looked forward to his work in the Philippines.

"I plan on missions as a career," Cartwright said. "The Philippines were a big attraction for me this summer. We'll be backpacking and camping for two months. We'll set up base camps and go into various villages daily. We'll be giving out copies of the Gospel of John and using the Jesus film."

Cartwright, obviously excited about his summer, said, "I can't see myself doing anything else with my life. I know I'll be blessed more than the people I minister to. I'd be miserable doing anything else."

Emily Taylor and Amy Fountain, both MC students, are looking forward to their missions work.

Taylor will be spending the summer in Oxnard, Calif. "I'm excited, but I'm not real sure what I've gotten myself into," she said with a smile. "I've been thinking about missions vocationally, and this will give me a chance to see what it's like."

Fountain will serve in Denver. "I'll be doing outreach and evangelism in the Denver area. As I understand it, I'll be working a lot in multifamily housing." When asked what



SHARING THE JOY — Amy Fountain (left) and Emily Taylor, both students at Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton, share a mix of excitement and apprehension as they approach their summer missions activities. Fountain will be serving in Denver, while Taylor will be headed for Oxnard, Calif. (Photo by Tony Martin)

drew her toward investing her summer in this way, she answered, "I've got several friends who worked last summer, and it was one of the greatest experiences of their lives."

According to Weaver McCracken, associate in the Collegiate Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, the two days of orientation were designed to prepare students for what would be a taxing summer. "Our challenge has been to get the word out to our students that these opportunities are available."

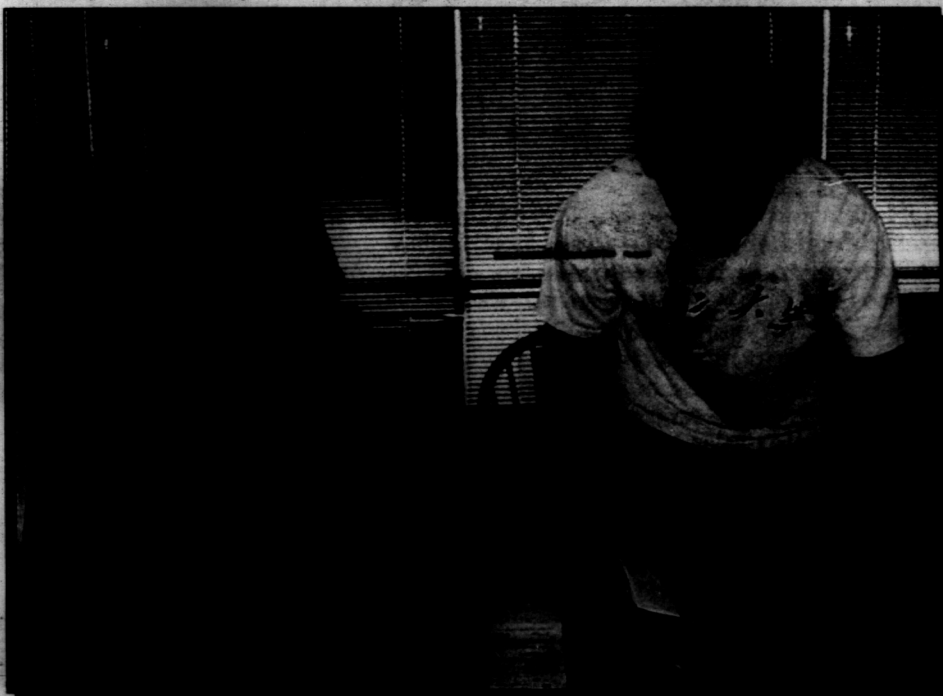
"In the orientation for our international missionaries, we've tried to give them a taste of cultural immersion: take them through mock customs, have them eat some not-so-good food, and have them carry their luggage around. It will help them anticipate what might happen on the field. Our home missionaries have been shown how to handle their emotions in working with a team, dealing with interpersonal relationships, and relating to others."

Ron Mumbower, associate pastor of congregational care at First Church, Jackson, and Lucy Hansford, communication specialist for Jackson Public Schools, spent time in helping students understand their personality types, as well as understanding the personalities of their leaders and co-workers.

"This generation of kids is very intentional," Mumbower stated. "They really want hands-on experiences, they want to be involved. Look at them! Have you ever seen such potential? They want to bring hope to the world. They're idealistic, but they're grounded in reality."

Students commit to eight to ten weeks of service, typically from about June 1-August 10.

"We're in a generational period in which students genuinely want to put their faith to work," McCracken stated. "When they see a real need, they're willing to make a difference."



PASSPORT, PLEASE — John Cartwright (left) a student at East Central Community College in Decatur, presents his passport to an unidentified staffer. Cartwright will be spending the summer backpacking and camping in the Philippines to reach people for Christ. (Photo by Tony Martin)

Laura Robertson of Memphis, a student at Mississippi College (MC) in Clinton, will be heading to China. "I wanted my perspective to be broadened," she said.

Was she apprehensive about going to China in light of heightened tensions created by the downed American spy plane?

"Well, yeah!" she admitted. "I know the Lord has called me over there and will protect me."

Using Psalm 139:3 as a reference, she said, "I know the Lord understands my path. I have no confidence whatsoever in my myself; the Lord will have to carry me."

Robertson was asked what drew her toward foreign missions.

"If we're going to be sensitive to God's heart," she stated, "then we have to know that God's heart is for the nations. We have to go."



OFFERING ENCOURAGEMENT — Lucy Hansford (standing, left), communication specialist for Jackson Public Schools, and Ron Mumbower (standing, right), associate pastor of congregational care at First Church, Jackson, encouraged students preparing to serve as summer missionaries across the U.S. (Photo by Tony Martin)

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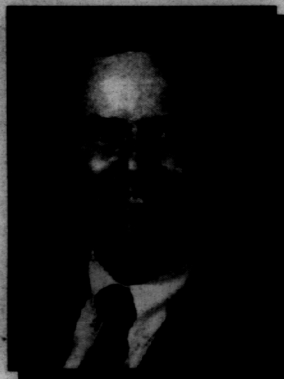
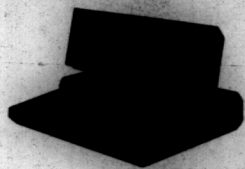
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**Postmaster: Send changes of address
to The BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box
530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Send
news, communication, and address
changes to The Editor, BAPTIST
RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS
39205-0530 (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
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VOLUME 125 NUMBER 10
(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4
and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street,
Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$8.35 per
year payable in advance. Economy plans
available for cooperating Mississippi
churches. Periodicals postage paid at
Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State
Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items —
one calendar week prior to requested pub-
lication date. Advertising — two calendar
weeks prior to requested publication date.

This time of year marks one of the holiest and most important periods in Christianity, because it is the period in which our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ began to make his way to Jerusalem for the last time.

He knew exactly what the road ahead held for him. His humanity likely urged him to turn around. His diety, however, compelled him forward. His fate — and the fate of mankind — rested in the hands of God.

History teaches that the One who knew no sin became sin for each one of us. He stretched out his arms and died an agonizing physical death, naked and covered with grime and insects. The Son of God was crucified as a common worldly criminal, so we common spiritual criminals could be saved.

Only a few days later, he arose and proved to one and all — at least to the people who have ears to hear — that he is who he said he is.

No scientist has ever been able to fully or rationally explain the Resurrection, even by invoking the latest theories or utilizing the most modern equipment. It simply happened the way Jesus always said it would happen.

He arose! He reigns today as Lord of Lords and King of Kings. He shall reign forever as Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Nothing we do will ever change that fact.

As strange as it may seem to Christians, there are still people among us who would deny the mission and the diety of Jesus Christ.

Just as people in his own hometown ridiculed him (Luke 4: 14-30), there are people today who refuse to accept the Word.

They ask, "Who could possibly believe a 1,000 year-old collection of 5,000 year-old folk tales, the origins of which cannot be verified beyond a reasonable doubt?"

"Who could possibly believe so preposterous a proposition that this book could foretell the coming of a Messiah thousands of years before it occurred, and then ascribe the fulfillment of that prophecy to an obscure, apparently illegitimate birth of a Jewish com-

moner in a backwater Middle Eastern town before there was even a decent calander?"

The biologist would explain that except for parthenogenesis and cloning, no creature on earth ever came into existence without the sexual union of a male and female of the same species.

The geneticist would inquire: since every person must receive half his deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) from his mother and half from his father, where was the Jesus' paternal DNA?

The investigative journalist would conclude that no independent documentation could be located to verify that the events of Jesus' ministry actually occurred as recorded in the Bible.

The lawyer would demand to see physical evidence to prove Mary's incredulous claim that she was pregnant and a virgin at the same time.

The atheist would argue that since there is no God, there can be no Son of God.

Simply put, no reasonable earthly explanation can be offered for the life of Christ. That's where faith comes in.

The righteousness of the Gospel message is grounded in faith (Rom. 1:17). We derive our faith from accepting that message (Rom. 10:17), not by what we sense in our natural world (2 Cor. 5:8).

We know that with faith, nothing is impossible (Matt. 17:20, Mark 11:22).

Faith is understanding that we cannot understand everything (Heb. 11:3), and yet we must still be willing to turn full control of our lives over to God (Psalm 97:10).

Faith is accepting with all your heart that God is who he says he is in his Word; that Jesus is the Son of God; that Jesus came into this world exactly as the Bible describes; and that Jesus is everything the Bible says he is.

It's no mistake that the preceding paragraph is present tense. God is, always has

"REMEMBER THAT TIME YOU TOLD YOUR BROTHER-IN-LAW YOU WOULD GET TO HEAVEN IN YOUR OWN WAY AND YOU DIDN'T WANT ALL THAT GOSPEL TALK? HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU FEELING RIGHT NOW?"



been, and always will be.

There are people who live by such faith. They're called Christians, sometimes with respect and often with derision — but they still don't mind being called by that Name.

At this special time of year in the Christian world, be sure to set aside some special personal time to share your faith with someone who doesn't know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Show them by word and deed the true meaning of Easter. During this time of chocolate bunnies and candy eggs, give the gift that counts for eternity.

Our Lord and Savior has asked us to bring a lost world to him (Matt. 28:18-20). After what he did for us, it's the least we can do for him.

Based on an editorial originally published on December 19, 1996.

GUEST OPINION:

Fighting over toy dinosaurs

*By Joe Brooks, pastor
Brodie Road Church, D'Iberville*

My wife and I have a 13-and-a-half year agreement — she cooks the meals and I do the dishes. It's worked pretty well for the most part.

A few months ago, however, she read the daily paper while I performed my husbandly duties. That's when this pastor's family had a serendipitous moment.

Webster's Dictionary defined the word serendipity as "the faculty or phenomenon of finding valuable or agreeable things not sought for."

Maybe I could call the moment I had last Thursday afternoon at my house a brief moment of fractured serendipity. Maybe it was just something parents do when they try to think of meaningful ways of handling their kids.

Anyway, call the moment a valuable lesson of what's good and bad about being Baptist.

I'm sure I didn't get the details from the article as Lisa read the story aloud: Church Members, Deacons Do Battle. It was a typical story of church life — church members and deacons pitted against each

other in open court over the contents of the church facility.

I knew the story all too painfully well. When I read of church fights in the paper, I am surprised at how little I'm surprised. I've seen it all splashed through the newspapers before.

While Lisa read, my two boys Kyle (age seven) and Graham (age three) were arguing over their toys.

I know people think pastor's houses are filled with serene, peaceful scenes and many choruses of I'm So Glad I'm a Part of the Family of God. Well, mine wasn't like that, especially last Thursday afternoon. Especially when toy dinosaurs were involved. The little rubber kind.

It seemed Kyle wanted Graham's dinosaur, and this was

no time to share. While Lisa tried to raise her reading voice, it struck me the two situations were definitely not dissimilar.

What was the scene of the fractured serendipity? Brothers arguing with each other over toys, much like churches often argue with each other over the insignificant details of church life.

Members of the same church often fight over the contents of a church facility, just like estranged spouses in a divorce settlement. The arguments reflect the same kind of selfishness, greed, and avarice unknown even among the unregenerate.

To paraphrase Martin Luther King, Jr., "I have a dream" that one day Baptists will show up

for church, get confused as to the identity of the real enemy, and start fighting the devil.

Maybe one day we can see the people within the church not as enemies but as brothers, sisters, and fellow soldiers in the Lord.

Conflict among church members is not altogether wrong. There are both biblical and historical examples of how conflicts among churches actually caused good things to be accomplished.

Paul disagreed with Barnabas in Acts 15, split with him, and continued on his mission. So did Barnabas and John Mark.

If we had only joyful moments among the church, we'd never have the labor pains of new movements of God among churches — but maybe one day we'll have some serendipitous moments of healing where we are able to say, "You know, brother, my relationship with God and you are far more important than my relationship with the contents of this building."

Maybe one day, we'll stop fighting over our toy dinosaurs.

Author uses 'Andy' for unique Bible study

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — In his senior year of college, Joey Fann would stay up all night watching episodes of The Andy Griffith Show on videotape. Now the software engineer and author uses the show as thought provoking, discussion starters for Bible study.

"I can remember several nights when my cousin would bring over tapes of the show and we would stay up all night watching and laughing," Fann said of the 40-year-old show that hooked him and millions of other viewers during its original eight seasons and years in reruns.

"It slowly occurred to me that no matter how many times I saw a specific episode, I never got tired of watching because they just got better and better. From that point forward, I was hooked."

Now the show is the subject of Fann's new Broadman & Holman book, *The Way Back to Mayberry: Lessons from a Simpler Time*, and a website, barneyfife.com.

Broadman & Holman is the trade publishing division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Each of the book's 30 chapters begins with a Scripture verse that corresponds to an episode. In addition to its foreword by George "Goobar" Lindsey

who was featured in the show, the book also contains photographs from the series.

presents moral dilemmas and other situations in a visual fashion," he said. "People who attend the classes see the characters on the screen face situations and decisions that are similar to those in their own lives."

Teens, seniors, young professionals and visitors who don't regularly attend church have come to the classes Fann has been teaching since 1998 at Twickenham Church of Christ in Huntsville, Ala.

Beyond the traditional church setting, schoolteachers, military chaplains, and prison wardens have successfully implemented the concept.

"The study is effective in reaching those who would not ordinarily attend a worship service or Bible class," Fann said. "The thought of attending a Bible class with people

you don't know can be somewhat intimidating."

However, he said, most people are familiar with the characters of Mayberry and they have that in common.

"I believe the show was a success because it made us feel at home. Even though there was never a real Mayberry, we all felt very comfortable there."

Fann said the show makes sense for a class because of its familiarity and timelessness. It becomes a source of common ground that attracts people from all religious backgrounds and all walks of life.

"When I mention the idea of doing an inspirational class based on the show, most people immediately become curious. Before you know it, people are coming to the class and bringing their friends."

"Basically, it offers a casual, non-threatening atmosphere for people to get together, have fun, and think about how we handle certain situations in life," he added.

Fann realizes using a television show as the inspiration for a Bible study is an unusual idea, but he said The Andy Griffith Show was an unusual show.

"Although there are few direct references to the Bible, I believe the show is filled with the basic morals and Christian principles taught by the Scriptures," he said.

"Each show tended to have a good moral theme that was brought out by the story line. Basic values such as character, personal responsibility, honesty, and integrity were routinely exemplified by the show."

"I believe these characteristics are uncommon for most television shows past or present," he said.

THE WAY BACK TO MAYBERRY

LESSONS FROM SIMPLER TIMES

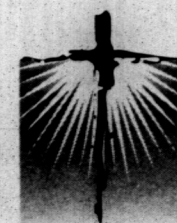
JOEY FANN
FOREWORD BY
GEORGE "GOOBER" LINDSEY

Fann's method of showing one of 30 video clips from the 249 episodes of The Andy Griffith Show and then discussing it in relation to a passage from the Bible has drawn a wide and diverse audience in more than 30 states and Canada, he said.

"I think this approach facilitates good discussion because it

Croatia playing favorites

OXFORD, England (BP) — Croatia is the latest post-communist country in Europe and Central Asia to propose a religion law that gives preferred status to majority religious groups. Minority religious communities in Croatia, including Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists, believe the latest draft of the proposed "Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities" gives them a second-class status under the majority Roman Catholic Church. Keston News Service reported April 4. The bill makes a distinction between established "historical religions" and newer groups, similar to religion laws in Russia, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Bulgaria. A religion bill that would favor the Orthodox Church is under consideration in Romania's parliament. Croatia's proposed law, which would replace laws enacted when the country was a republic of communist Yugoslavia, will be presented to parliament sometime this spring. Newroom-Online.com reported April 6. Croatia's Roman Catholic Church is not considered a state religion under current law, but it is the only religious body to have pensions for clergy supported by state funds. An estimated 85% of Croatia's population identifies with the Catholic Church, although no census figures have been taken since the country declared independence in 1991. Croatia's latest draft religion law recognizes the Catholic Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Jewish communities, the Islamic community, the Lutheran Church, and the Reformed Church as "historical religions." The law also grants the territory of Croatia for more than one hundred years. Other religions in existence at the time the law is enacted must receive the same subsequent groups must register by submitting a special application with details of the group's structure and number of adherents. Baptist and Adventist leaders say the draft law generally is not restrictive, but they are troubled by the distinction between historical and non-historical religious communities.



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST Record

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

APRIL 12, 2001

VOL. 125

No. 10

Looking back

10 years ago

Calling the world's largest Protestant denomination — and the nation in which most of its members reside — to prayer for spiritual awakening will highlight the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention at the Georgia World Congress Center June 4-6.

20 years ago

Doug Watterson, pastor of First Church, Knoxville, Tenn., and chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention order of business committee, says, "The main thrust of the program [for the 1981 convention] is that we will have a great conciliatory convention, avoiding any theological slant."

50 years ago

During recent revival services at Moorhead Church, a total of 151 people united with the church, with 106 of that number presenting themselves for baptism. On high attendance Sunday, 365 people are present. A goal of 281 people had been set.

Boston Plunge challenges college students

By Tim Nicholas
Staff Writer

"When God gives you an opportunity — when he opens the door for you to go and serve him in some place other than your home town — take it."

That's the advice of Kelly Dean, a student at Delta State University in Cleveland. Dean spent her spring break in Boston along with more than 200 other

Mississippi university and college students participating in Boston Plunge.

Boston Plunge was sponsored by the Baptist Convention of New England and the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's (MBCB) Collegiate Ministry Department coordinated the recruitment effort in Mississippi. (See articles on pages one and three of the Partnership News special section in this week's issue.)

While working with a group of students to hang wallpaper in a church office, Dean said, "It's amazing what he (God) will show you and how he'll bless your life."

Dean's comments were echoed by virtually all the students who spoke about their mission trip.

Jeremy Montgomery, a student at Pearl River Community College in Poplarville, explained his commitment to missions while mixing a batch of powdered drink in a Salvation Army shelter.

"I'm doing it for God. He's given me the opportunity to come help somebody out. If he's going to give me the opportunity, I'm not going to waste it," he said.

Christy Carley, campus minister at Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton, said of the group she brought to Boston, "This puts a definite vision for missions in their hearts."



REACHING NEW HEIGHTS — Helping to decorate a pastor's office at a church in Boston are (from left) Beth Hassell, Kelly Dean, Charles Gailey, and Andy Edwards, all students at Delta State University, Cleveland. The students were in the city during spring break to participate in Boston Plunge. (Photo by Tim Nicholas)



LEADING THE WAY — Prayerwalking through the campus of Boston University are (from left) Kyle Edwards, Amanda Johnson, and Amanda Bowers, all students at Holmes Community College, Goodman. A prayer-walk calls on participants to pray for people nearby. The students were part of the Boston Plunge event during spring break 2001. (Photo by Tim Nicholas)



HOMEWORK HELP — Mississippi Collee students Lauren Glass (front left) and Beth McDonald (back right) tutor Boston school children as part of a Salvation Army program. The students devoted their spring break this year to participating in Boston Plunge. (Photo by Tim Nicholas)

LOOKING THE WRONG WAY

Several years ago I was flying from Memphis to Dallas. The flight was at night and it was pouring down rain. I did not particularly like flying out at night, and I sure did not like taking off in a rainstorm, but that's the way life is at times. Sometimes it is stormy and dark, yet you just have to press on!

Everyone was aboard, the doors were shut, and we taxied out onto the rain soaked runway to wait our turn for take-off. Finally, the engines revved up and we headed off down the flight path. In moments we were airborne. Not only were we in the air, but we were in a thick soup of clouds. You could see some lightening and the rain was peppering the plane as we kept rising. I was awed, as I was gazing out the window, at nature's interesting and sometimes amazing phenomenon of clouds and lightening.

As we continued to rise, you could see, through breaks in the clouds, the lights of the city below. In short order, we were up into the clouds where there was nothing but darkness, that is except for the lights of the plane and an occasional lightening strike. Then, something happened — I witnessed a sight I



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

had never before seen. As I peered down through the storm clouds, there appeared to be what looked like an egg-crate, with each little indentation filled with a puddle of light.

I thought that the pilot must have turned on the landing lights, causing the tremendous glow from the plane to reflect on the other side of the dark cloud, but...no, that's not what was happening at all! As I continued watching these interesting and captivating pockets of light beneath the plane, I saw the source of the light — a bright, full moon! It just seemed to be hovering over the clouds, filling each indentation with its light.

It occurred to me that the reason I did not understand where the light was coming from and what was happening was because I was looking in the wrong direction! I was simply staring at the rain clouds that I

had been a part of and almost missed the brilliance of a full moon rise at night by looking the wrong way!

Through the years, I have seen others doing the same thing I did that night. Because they are looking the wrong way, they almost miss, and sometime do miss, the brilliance of God at work!

I've seen spouses, men and women, get so focused on the bad things they see in their mate, that they are never able to appreciate the good things. I have watched as church members develop tunnel vision, where they only see the pastoral deficiencies and are unable to celebrate the glow of God that may shine through the shepherd. I have also seen pastors who have looked, with such intensity, upon just one small dimension of church life and failed to see other aspects of Kingdom glory around them.

Sometimes, we get so obsessed with the actions of one person that we lose sight of the fact that a church is a congregation. In John 20:11 and following, Mary is seen on Easter morning at the tomb.

She is weeping and as she stoops down, someone comes and speaks to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She said to him, "Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him." The conversation continues as Mary thinks she is speaking with the gardener. The voice called her name, "Mary." Verse 16 says she turns herself and said unto him, "Master!" She almost missed Easter because she was looking the wrong way.

Each of us can determine which way we are going to look. In one direction there is doubt and in the other, faith. In one direction there is uncertainty and in the other, confidence. In one direction there is fear and the other, courage. In one direction there is bitterness and the other, kindness. In one direction there is hate and the other, the buoyant hope of love.

Maybe, even at this very moment, God is trying to turn your head and help you to look another way — his way. Don't miss the blessing!

Messenger cards now available

Churches planning to send messengers to the 2001 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 12-13 at the Superdome in New Orleans can acquire messenger cards by contacting the office of the executive director-treasurer at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB). The cards will be mailed only to churches requesting the cards.

To request the cards and for more information, contact the MBCB executive director-treasurer's office at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3201 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 201. E-mail: bbox@mbcb.org.

Battle joined over library Internet filtering

WASHINGTON (BP) — The American Library Association (ALA) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed suit March 20 to strike down a federal law requiring public libraries that receive government Internet discounts to install filters on their computers to combat pornography.

Pro-family organizations announced they would work to defend the law in court.

The ALA and ACLU challenged the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) in a federal court in Philadelphia. The case may be on a fast track to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In this case, a three-judge panel of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals will deliver a decision, and the Supreme Court will review any appeal.

CIPA mandates libraries and public schools that receive a government subsidy for Internet access install technology to screen out obscenity and child pornography on all computers and soft-core porn and other harmful material on those used by children.

In its suit, the ACLU charged the government with censorship.



SAFETY AT RISK — Library computer terminals allowing children and youth to freely access pornography — or to be enticed by adults who are viewing pornography — have become the latest battleground in America's culture war. (BP photo)

It "is choking off the free flow of information on the Internet to the library patrons who need it the most," ACLU lawyer Ann Beeson said in a written release.

The ACLU argued the law would increase the division

between the "haves," those who can afford Internet access in their homes, and the "have-nots," those who do not have access at home.

It also contended the law is unworkable because filters

block material that is not prohibited.

The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLI) denied the law violates the First Amendment.

"Libraries and public schools have a compelling interest to protect the physical and psychological well-being of children," ACLI Chief Counsel Jay Sekulow said in a written statement.

"The use of Internet filtering software as required by [CIPA] is a reasonable and constitutional way to protect children from online pornography."

Jane LaRue of the Family Research Council (FRC) acknowledged filters are not perfect.

"Blocking of constitutionally protected material can happen, but it isn't fatal or terminal," LaRue said in a written release.

"Wrongly blocked sites can be unblocked in a couple of minutes on user-based software and within 24 hours on server-based technology."

Houston church votes shift to SBT

HOUSTON (BP) — First Church of Houston (Texas), in a congregational vote, approved a study committee's recommendation to reduce the church's ties to the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) to minimal levels and shift Cooperative Program (CP) support through the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC).

At least \$156,505 will be contributed to CP, amounting to 1.8% of a \$9.3 million budget in the coming year, said Kirk Beaudreaux, the church's financial service director.

Another Houston church, the 12,000-member Sagemont, voted recently to double its CP allocation, sending \$360,000, or 6% of a \$6 million budget, through SBTC.

Suits allege discrimination against evangelicals

WASHINGTON (BP) — A trio of lawsuits pending in federal court in Washington, D.C., plus a fourth in San Diego, allege that the U.S. Navy has engaged in systematic discrimination against evangelical chaplains, including Southern Baptists.

Attorney Art Schulcz, who represents parties in the three suits filed in Washington, said the Navy is violating the First Amendment by failing to guarantee personnel free exercise of religion.

The class action lawsuit followed a similar complaint filed by the Chaplaincy of Full Gospel Churches, a group that endorses chaplains on behalf of 7.5 million charismatics. Both were consolidated last fall for further court action.

In a motion to dismiss the suits, the U.S. Justice Department replied the suits lack merit. The Justice Department's brief argued that meeting the faith needs of Navy personnel entails more than simply mirroring the breakdown of faiths within the Navy.

Determining the appropriate composition of faith categories in the Chaplain Corps requires professional judgment by officers involving a number of factors, the Justice Department said in its brief.

As for another complaint by evangelicals, the Justice Department said attempts to promote a general Protestant service on some Navy bases is an effort to maximize limited resources — such as availability of chaplains and worship space — in order to provide for ministry needs.

The Justice Department said the plaintiffs are asking for court action that would set denominational quotas to meet their goal of reflecting the Navy's religious demographics.

The Justice Department also said some of the claims should be barred by a six-year statute of limitations in Naval codes, while others fail to plead sufficient facts to establish the court's jurisdiction.

The Southern Baptist chaplains and others in the class action suit, meanwhile, recounted instances when they have been

denied promotions, forced to retire early, or subjected to retaliation for filing complaints about anti-evangelical bias.

The five chaplains with Southern Baptist Convention ties are:

- Robert Adair of Columbia, Tenn., who enlisted in 1967, earned a master of divinity degree in 1977, and became a Navy chaplain in 1979.

Despite outstanding service, he said a board selected him for early retirement in 1995. Were it not for the board's decision, the suit said he would have continued on active duty and retired at a higher pay rate.

- Thomas Rush of Clovis, N.M., who served as a line officer from 1977-82, when he left to attend seminary. Commissioned as a Reserve chaplain in 1986, he went on active duty in 1990.

Despite outstanding reviews, the suit said the Navy denied him a promotion in 1993 by disregarding his previous duty reports. The following year he left the Navy.

- Active duty chaplain David Wilder of Hubert, N.C., who was passed over twice for a commander's position the past two years because of discrimination.

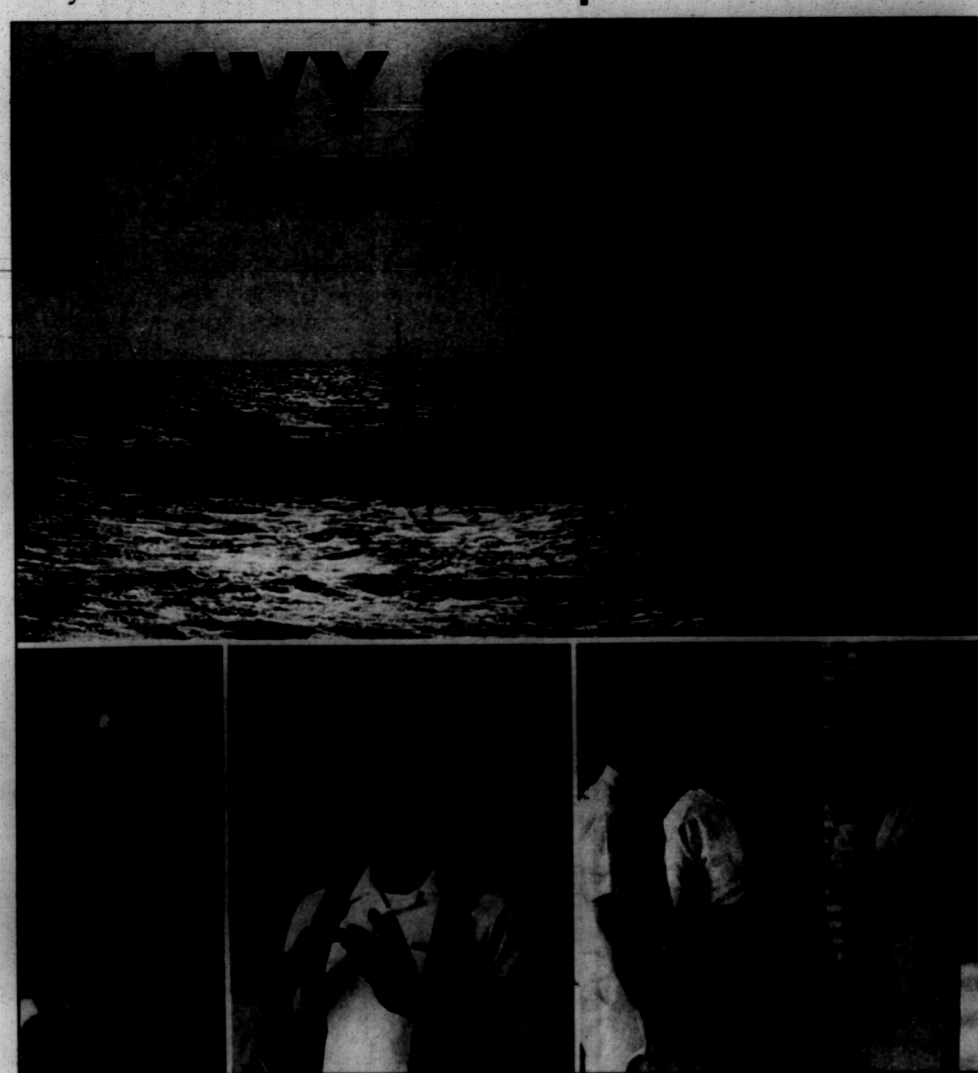
- Gregory DeMarco of Clovis, N.M., who was a Navy deep-sea diver for nine years until leaving for seminary. He was later commissioned in the Reserves. Recalled to active duty in 1987, he became a lieutenant commander in 1993. His superior rated him in a way that made him non-competitive for promotion, the suit said.

- James Weibling of Fort Worth, Texas, who served twice with the Navy, first as a line officer and later as a chaplain. Despite an outstanding career, and because of religious animosity against non-liturgical chaplains, the Navy twice failed to select Weibling for promotion, the suit said.

Other Baptists involved in the lawsuit include Ronald Tomlin of Madison Heights, Va., who is endorsed by Liberty Baptist Fellowship, and Timothy Nall of Little Rock, Ark., endorsed by the Baptist Missionary Association of America.

In addition to the individual claims, the unconstitutionality of the Navy's alleged religious quota system is an integral part of the lawsuit.

The lawsuit asks the court to declare policies unconstitutional and prohibit the Navy from further discrimination.



BALANCED PROMOTIONS? — This Navy brochure appears to promote diversity in seeking chaplain recruits, but plaintiffs of lawsuits allege an imbalance in religious diversity regarding chaplain promotions. (BP photo)

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Members of the Baptist Student Union (BSU) at the University of Mississippi worked in North Delta Association during spring break. The students and Keith Cating, BSU director, spent a week renovating the literacy building on the grounds of First Church, Friars Point. It is being renovated by the association to be used as a literacy/tutoring building. Five members of the group (pictured, from left) are Megan Norris, Jackson; Andrea Thornton, Iuka, leader; Kathy King, Oxford; Jolyn Pittman, McComb; and Sara El-Sarjo, Batesville. M. C. Johnson is executive director of North Delta Association.

Holy Week services at First Church, Laurel, began on April 8 and will be held through April 15. Messages, delivered by Randy Turner, pastor, will include: April 12, *It is Finished*, noon, and Holy Communion, 6 p.m.; April 13, *Into Thy Hands I Commend My Spirit*, noon; April 15, *Resurrection Celebration*. Complimentary lunch served at noon during weekday services.

How Great Thou Art will be presented at Indian Springs Church, Laurel, April 13-15. The times are Friday and Saturday, 7 p.m.; and Sunday, 10:30 a.m. For additional information, call the church at (601) 428-1279.

Fifth Sunday Gospel Sing will be held at Byram Church, Metro Association, April 29 at 6 p.m. Featured will be Sam Puckett, Raymond, and Wanda Randall, Clinton. Brenda Quattlebaum is music director. Roy Maine is pastor. For additional information, call Quattlebaum at (601) 879-8146.

Women's Ministry of First Church, Verona, will host the Elizabeth George Conference, May 19, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. George is an author, teacher, and speaker whose ministry is dedicated to teaching the Bible to women in a way that changes their lives. For additional information, call Maggie Hamilton, (662) 767-8306; Sandi Ligon, (662) 566-2817; or the church office at (662) 566-8380.

North Carrollton Church, North Carrollton, will present *Worthy Sandals* on April 13-16 at 7 p.m. nightly.

A retirement party for Carl and Mabel Evans will be held April 21, 2-6 p.m., at Elmo Church, Jefferson County.



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**BRUCE
CARROLL**
in concert at
North Greenwood
Baptist Church

615 Grand Blvd ♦ Greenwood

**April 27
7:00 p.m.**

Nursery provided
Love offering will be taken

For more information contact North Greenwood Baptist Church at (662) 453-2801.

Gospel sing featuring Terry Joe Terrell and Labreska Boaz will be held at Calvary Church, New Augusta, on April 14 at 7 p.m.

Flowood Church, Flowood, will host the 5th annual golf tournament April 21 at Willow Creek, Brandon. Registrants are required to check in by 7:30 a.m. Proceeds for the event will go toward the annual mission construction trip for the Brotherhood Association.

For additional information, contact Eddie Cook (601) 992-3711; or Flowood Church, (601) 992-6464.

Gospel singing featuring the Masters Quartet from Booneville will be held at Thorn Hill Church, Pelahatchie, on April 14 at 7 p.m.

Society Hill Church, Oakvale, will have a cookout and singing, beginning at 11 a.m. on April 28.



RAs of Port Gibson Church, Port Gibson, participated in a RA outing to Rocky Springs, March 3. "This was a six-mile hike on nature trails for work on their Hiking Patch," said Richard Bufkin, director of RAs. Pictured (from left, back row) are Bufkin, Victor Rushing, and Bin Andrews; (middle row) Lashley Hawkins, Matthew Cranfield, and Colby Rushing; (front row) Ben Anderson, Tyler Cranfield, Richie Bufkin, and Tate Chapman.

FLOWOOD BAPTIST

5th Annual Golf Tournament

Willow Creek

Saturday, April 21st, 2001

Registration Deadline • 7:30 am

Saturday, April 21st, 2001

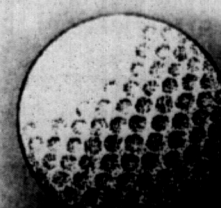
Starts at 8:00 am

\$50 per person • \$200 per team

PRIZES AND TROPHIES

Proceeds will go towards the Annual Mission Construction Trip for the Flowood Baptist Church Brotherhood Association.

Call Eddie Cook at 992-3711 or
Flowood Baptist Church at 992-6464
for more information



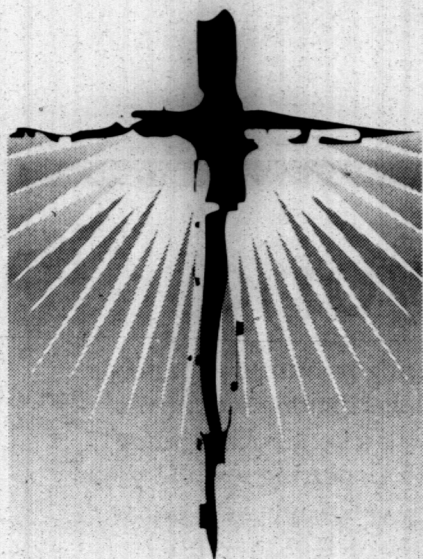
Free e-cards at LifeWay website

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Dozens of electronic cards are now offered free of charge for many occasions at LifeWay Christian Stores' retail website, www.lifewaystores.com.

Through partnership with DaySpring.com, e-cards are now available to send to friends, relatives, and co-workers. Use of the cards is free, and no registration is required.

"This e-card service is a great way to touch people's lives in our computer-based, over-scheduled age," said Mark King, e-commerce director at LifeWay Christian Stores. "With e-mail use continuing to grow by leaps and bounds, we wanted to equip the Christian community in this very practical and effective way."

The online store offers approximately 100,000 resources and provides around-the-clock accessibility. LifeWay Christian Stores also may be reached through a toll-free customer telephone number, 1-800-448-8032.



MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST

Partnership Missions

SPRING 2001



VOL. II, NO. I

♦ PARTNERSHIP MISSIONS DEPARTMENT ♦ P.O. Box 530, JACKSON, MS 39205-0530 ♦ PHONE (601) 292-3398 ♦ FAX (601) 292-3390 ♦ E-MAIL: krhodes@mbcb.org

PURPOSE:
TO PROVIDE AN
OPPORTUNITY FOR
VOLUNTEERS
TO USE THEIR SKILLS
TO WITNESS FOR CHRIST
THROUGH MISSION
PARTNERSHIPS.

Witches alive and well in Salem!

By Tim Nicholas, staff writer
MBCB

There is a "spiritual stirring" in Salem, Mass., said Baptist pastor Bill Combs to a group from Blue Mountain College, Blue Mountain, Miss., before they delivered witnessing material door to door the week of March 12.

The students were in the Boston area for Boston Plunge, a spring break ministry (See page three.)

In a town where more than seven percent of the population claim to be witches, Combs said that since most of the evangelical ministers have secular jobs, "it would take several months to do what you [the students] can do in a few hours."

Combs said the witches are "in your face" wanting to disrupt anything pertaining to Christ. He said pastors lock up the churches because the witches will place crystals and pentagrams inside.

Volunteers from Kentucky brought Combs a Pilgrim outfit for use during Halloween festivities. "When I wear the Pilgrim costume, people take literature without hesitation," he said.

He said that last Halloween, which brings in tourists and witches from all over the world, the evangelicals set up a tent. Despite the evil surroundings, "We had people standing in line to have someone pray for them," said Combs.

Below: Advertising on a campus bulletin board, the Boston University (BU) Women's Interfaith Action Group invites all BU women to a talk by a Wiccan witch. (Photo by Tim Nicholas)

Elizabeth Moss
(a student in BU's Neometon Pagan Student Alliance)

**"My spiritual journey
as a Wiccan"**

Monday, March 19

5-6:30pm

in STM Room 320, 745 Comm. Ave.
(Anne Howard Shaw Women's Center)



Above: Standing across the street from the Salem Witch Museum, Salem, Mass., pastor Bill Combs explains the spiritual war going on in Salem to students from Blue Mountain College. (Photo by Tim Nicholas, MBCB)

Please Note

2001 Partnership Missions Celebration

Banquet, November 9
First Baptist Church
Fellowship Hall, East
Jackson

November 10
Baptist Building
Sky Room
Jackson

Volunteers needed for short-term mission opportunities



Volunteer medical teams bring the love of Jesus to Hondurans. (Photo by Will Pounds, McGehee, Ark.)

The following 2001 mission teams have room for more volunteers:

HONDURAS:
Tegucigalpa
September 22-29
La Ceiba

August 11-18 and September 14-21

The Tegucigalpa teams are generally medical/dental missions. The La Ceiba missions this year include construction of churches, smaller medical teams (usually to schools), and a small evangelistic team (such as Vacation Bible School, etc.) There are a total of 15 teams scheduled to go to Tegucigalpa and a total of 12 teams scheduled to go to La Ceiba this year. If you are interested, please contact the Partnership Missions Department at

(800) 748-1651, ext. 398 or (601) 292-3398, or by e-mail, krhodes@mbcb.org, or write, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-1702.

UKRAINE
Odessa
August 18-28

A construction team needs four or five additional volunteers. Volunteers will be involved in evangelism activities as well as construction. If you are interested, please contact Paul McGehee at (662) 562-4268 or the Partnership Missions Department at (800) 748-1651, ext. 398 or (601) 292-3398, or by e-mail, krhodes@mbcb.org, or write, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-1702.

On mission — God at work

Supported by a great staff in our department, I am looking forward to contributing toward bringing Mississippi and the world to Jesus.

*-Ken Rhodes, director
Partnership Missions
Department*

January 15, 2001, was an exciting day as I began the journey of Partnership Missions director. Paul Harrell has provided excellent leadership in Men's Ministry which for many years housed Partnership Missions. Over the past several months Paul gave leadership to development and growth of Partnership Missions becoming a department of convention work.

Supported by a great staff in our department, I am looking forward to contributing toward bringing Mississippi and the world to Jesus. Our department is part of the state convention's Mission Strategy Team led by David Michel. Other departments on the team are Men's Ministry, Collegiate Ministry, Woman's Missionary Union, Strategic Ministry, and Stewardship.

The purpose of the Mission

Strategy Team is to encourage persons in their discovery of Christ's Kingdom and to empower them for fulfilling God-sized tasks in his redemptive mission. How does Partnership Missions fit into the purpose of the overall team?

Our department staff has identified five words or thoughts which give us guidance. At present we are fleshing out what these mean and how each will look in the future.

We are open to your input. The guiding words are:

2) Connecting resources with needs.

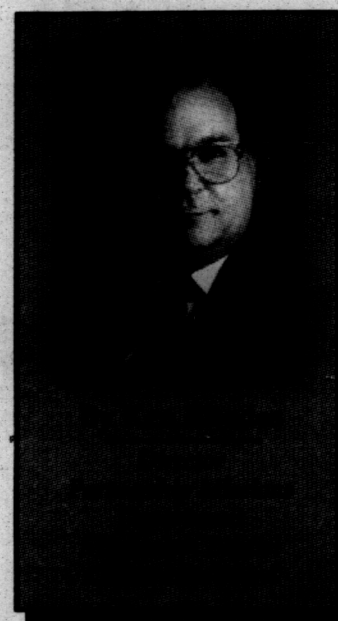
3) Facilitating volunteers

wherever God is leading.
4) Capturing a world view.
5) Developing a worldwide network of mission volunteers sharing knowledge, resources, and encouragement.

These are only in formulative stages and are helping us at the present to set goals and strategies. It is certain that Mississippi Baptists are interested and ready to be involved in volunteer missions.

You will see from this newsletter the various partnerships which are only a

part of the total picture of Mississippi Baptists reaching out to the world.



Volunteers make a difference!

By Tim Nicholas, staff writer
MBCB

A crowd of 300 people attended the 2000 Mississippi Partnership Celebration at First Church, Jackson, last November. Leaders gave reports concerning Partnership statistics and told of God's blessings on the ministry.

Jane Baldwin, who with her husband Jim coordinates volunteer work in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, said a wheelchair donated to the ministry went to a man who had lost his legs because of diabetes. "The Lord has a wheelchair for me," said the man, who began shouting praises to God.

Archie Crawford, who with his wife Virginia coordinate volunteer work from La Ceiba, Honduras, told of a water project in Baranca Chele. A friend, Pepe, was finally able to shower at his house after the project was completed by Partnership volunteers. "You do make a difference," said Crawford.

David Lee, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, told of launch after launch of Partnership-aided churches. After a project where Mississippians helped churches rediscover a New Testament vision, one doubled in attendance from 40 to 80 people. "You have been and are making a major impact," he said.

Other reporters included Ken Lyle for Northeast Impact; Tom and June Nolen for Ukraine; and Larry Cox for the International Mission Board (IMB).

When missionaries say they need prayer, said Cox, a Mississippian and vice president of the IMB, "don't believe they are just saying that to get rid of you."

Keynote speaker Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, said that "in a world of need, of grave responsibilities, and wonderful opportunities, God has placed in us a hunger."

"God has been dealing with many of the audience members," noted Futral, "wanting them to say, 'Lord, here is what I have.'"

Said Futral, "Watch what he'll do with it."



Cox

'I thank my God every time I remember you.'

By Paul Harrell, former director
MBCB, Partnership Missions

In Phil. 1:3-7a (NIV), times may have been similar to our day when new kinds of mission partnerships were beginning to form. The apostle Paul identified them, as we would today, as a Partnership in sharing the Gospel. In this prayer of thanksgiving Paul states, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

These words of the apostle Paul express my feelings as I come to retirement time on May 11, after 35 and a half years with the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Paul said, "it is right for me to feel this way about you since I have you in my heart." Every time I remember one of you who have been involved in Brotherhood and Partnership ministries, with joy I pray for you. I will continue to do that as long as the Lord gives me the presence of mind.

There are many things for which I thank the Lord. I will list a few priority items:

- For the administration of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. I have worked with five executive directors during my tenure. Each has demonstrated a strong commitment to the mission concept of sharing the gospel with

all the people of our world.

- For the Lord leading Ken Rhodes to become the director of the Partnership Missions Department as of January 15. Ken has been on a learning curve gaining an understanding of all aspects of our Partnerships. I commend him to you. As you get to know him you will love and appreciate the giftedness he brings to this ministry.
- For the hundreds of thousands of mission volunteers that have impacted my life and ministry these years. Only the Lord can know the abundance of your resources committed to mission causes.
- For associations and churches who have modeled missions that resulted in the mobilization of career and volunteer missionary personnel to stand in the gap so the forces of evil would not destroy the hamlets, the villages, and the cities of our world.
- For family and friends who have consistently prayed me through the stressful moments of life and affirmed me for the next venture.
- For the joy of seeing God at work in life's everyday affairs and to know that God is creating new legacies of mission ventures for the next generation of believers.

I will have a continuing interest in the work and ministry of our churches, associations, and the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. I will be your most ardent prayer supporter. Thank you, Mississippi Baptists, for these years of joyful ministry.



Students take the 'Boston Plunge'

By Tim Nicholas, staff writer
MBCB

More than 200 Mississippi college and university students donated their spring breaks to ministry projects in Boston, Mass., the week of March 12.

The week's effort was called "Boston Plunge." The plunge was not only into a different culture, but also into icy weather. Temperatures plunged into the 20s and 30s for part of the week.

Student efforts ranged from passing out Bible portions to residents of Salem, Mass., home to 3,000 witches, to sorting thousands of cans and boxes at the Greater Boston Food Bank.

Other projects included giving students hot chocolate or toaster pastries at Boston University and prayerwalking around campuses; helping to construct a medical-dental clinic at a Salvation Army building; and tutoring children in an after-school program.

"It takes me out of my comfort zone," said Carla Gail Simpson, a student at Mississippi College in Clinton. "God challenges you."

Each of the Mississippi students, joined by about 100 volunteers from other states, worked half a day in at least eight venues. Curtis Cook, coordinator of Baptist Collegiate Ministries for the Greater Boston area, worked out the schedule.

Besides assisting and strengthening ministries in Boston, the spring break program was designed "to help students gain a vision for ministries in the cities of the world," said Cook.

One student stopped Cook and asked, "Is there a time we can talk about what is God's call in my life and how it fits into Boston?"

Below: From left, Edye Denius, Stephanie Powell, and Jennifer Rawls, students at Pearl River Community College, serve lunch at a Boston soup kitchen.
(Photo by Tim Nicholas)



Several others spoke with associational staffers about becoming semester missionaries or transferring to a school in the area.

Cook said he could use students for varying lengths of time to "communicate the Gospel in a variety of ways to a variety of people."

Grant Alford, a student at Mississippi State University, Starkville, Miss., said he had always liked the Northeast because of the religious history there. "God opened a door for me to have the opportunity to come (on this trip)," he said.

"A lot of people do not know about Christ. They are spiritual people but not religious," he said, adding, "I may come back."



Above: Boston university students mix with those from Mississippi in a worship service.
(Photo by Tim Nicholas)



Left: Mississippi students sort cans at the Greater Boston, Mass., Food Bank.
(Photo by Tim Nicholas)

"It takes me out of my comfort zone," said Carla Gail Simpson, a student at Mississippi College in Clinton. "God challenges you."

Staying open to missions... no matter your age or circumstance

Missionary Profile

By Tim Nicholas, staff writer
MBCB



Kirby and Linda Smith

It seemed as if everything in their lives added up to Kirby and Linda

Smith's decision to become missionaries to Ukraine.

The Florence, Miss. couple left March 22 to become volunteer coordinators in Odessa, Ukraine. They will work with Mississippi Partnership fieldside coordinators Thomas and June Nolen, aiding volunteers any way they can.

The International Mission Board (IMB) has appointed the Smiths to a three-year term as "Masters" under the International Service Corps. The program is for those 50 years of age and over.

"We both felt this coming," said Linda. "I grew up in a mission church." A missionary cousin led Linda's father to the Lord.

The couple met in a mission church, Trinity Baptist, in Greensburg, Ind., where Linda played piano and Kirby worked for Kirby Construction.

In recent years, the couple led in witness training at their church and participated in mission trips including trips to Ukraine.

Kirby went to Ivano-Frankovsk in western Ukraine in 1997 to teach "Evangelism Explosion."

"When Kirby came back, I knew he was different," said Linda. "That's the reason

I felt I wanted to go the next year (to Illichovsk, near Odessa)."

Afterwards, "I felt as if I had been blessed so much of my life and had seen people who didn't have anything but loved God with all their hearts." She added, "I didn't have that kind of love in me."

After what Kirby termed "a lifelong process," the couple agreed to surrender their lives to God's will concerning missions. "We would go as far as God kept opening doors," he said.

A few months later, Paul Harrell, former Partnership Missions director for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, phoned to ask if they would pray about working with the Mississippi Partnership.

The Smiths have been tutored in the Russian language and have had as a houseguest a young woman from Ukraine who is attending Wesley College in Florence.

In addition, they have been active in hosting students from Russia, and Belarus who come to Jackson for training with the Mississippi Consortium for International Development to learn American culture and business practices.

"That experience has given us even more love for the former Soviet peoples," said Linda. "We have friends all over. We still hear from them."

Linda said others might want to consider "being open no matter what age or circumstance to what God has for them."

Kirby would have those open to missions to go on a volunteer mission trip "to really experience, to touch, and to feel and see the people."



The challenge of '10-40 Window' unreached people groups

By Clay Moss, consultant
MBCB Partnership Missions Department

Many exciting things are happening in the Partnership Missions Department. It has been a real pleasure and a lot of fun working with the entire staff.

I have had the privilege of traveling around the state with Ken Lyle, consultant, Partnership Missions Department and Ken Rhodes, director, Partnership Missions Department, to visit pastors and associational missions directors. We have had the opportunity to share our vision and work where global missions is concerned.

Many of you are aware of our partnerships in the northeastern US as well as our partnerships with Honduras and the

Odessa Oblast of eastern Ukraine.

A number of you have traveled to these areas with us and participated as volunteer missionaries. We, along with our North American Mission Board (NAMB) and International Mission Board (IMB) colleagues, are appreciative and indebted to you for your efforts. Without you, our part of God's work would not be nearly as fruitful.

The Lord has now challenged us with the 10-40 Window. His hand in the planning has already been evident. The 10-40 Window got its name because of its geographic location. It is situated 10 degrees south latitude by 40 degrees north latitude and extends from west Africa eastward past east Asia.

We will be working to link up key Global Priority churches, associations and other Great Commission Baptists with unreached people groups in the 10-40 Window. An unreached people group, (UPG) is basically defined as an ethnic group or specific language group of people who have not had sufficient opportunity to hear the Gospel. Many such groups exist in the 10-40 Window.

A Mississippi Baptist Convention vision team from First Church, Jackson, and First Church, Gulfport, recently journeyed through central and south eastern Asia. Please pray for this team to be sensitive to what God is doing as they seek to know Him. He would have Mississippi Baptists participate in this part of the world.



Mississippians Tom and June Nolen returned to Ukraine in March for a third term as Mississippi Partnership coordinators for Ukraine. The Nolens are being joined by Kirby and Linda Smith who will assist them in facilitating volunteer work in the former Soviet republic.
(Photo by Tim Nicholas)

Linking Belhaven with Boston and Bogue Chitto with Bethany

By Ken Lyle, consultant
MBCB Partnership Missions Department

I received a rare phone call a few days ago. A Baptist from Bogue Chitto was moving to Delaware. She was inquiring about Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) churches in the Wilmington area. For her and her husband, participation in the body of Christ was of primary concern as they began this new segment of their lives. It was a special joy to not only tell her about Bethany Baptist Church, but also to assure her that God was in this "move."

Recently during spring break college students from Mississippi were involved in targeting another northeastern city — Boston, Mass. Prior to their journey, Reid Vance, Baptist Student Union Director at Belhaven College, Jackson, Miss., invited me to share some moments of orientation with the nine students who would participate in the spring break mission. When I met with the students, after a brief and inspiring time of worship, I found myself sitting before a small but enthusiastic group of college students.

These students would join 200 other Mississippi collegians whose hearts had turned toward the home of Paul Revere and the roots of Baptists in our nation. Their ministry blitz would include students from several other states. Boston will never be the same because new churches will be started, the hungry will be fed, the lost will be found by the Good News of Christ and much more.

Whether it's dozens of college folk or a husband and wife being transferred, God is deploying Mississippi Baptists where he needs them most and, he is using Partnership Missions as a primary channel through which to make his "moves." Please allow me to share a few more illustrations:

- North Delta Association, Clarksdale, will send a team to train Mission Education leaders in the Boston area (July).
- First Church, Jackson, will send three groups to Boston, beginning a three-year partnership with a new church start (summer of 2001).
- Calhoun Association, Calhoun City, plans to send at least 40 people to Vermont (Green Mountain Association) to do light construction, lead Backyard Bible Clubs, etc., (summer 2001).
- New Zion Church, Copiah Association, has begun a partnership process with North Park Church, Pittsburgh, Penn.
- First Church, Clinton, and Bethany Church, Newport, Del., have established a three-year joint venture to grow God's Kingdom.
- Beulah Church, Myrtle, will send a team to conduct Vacation Bible School (VBS) and do light construction with Baptists in South Jersey Association, Medford, N.J.

Indeed, Mississippi Baptists are having an impact on the Northeastern United States with the Gospel of Christ! You, your group, the congregation to which you belong, and your association can play a vital role in growing God's Kingdom through Partnership Missions! He is working in the Northeast; let us help you join him!

Dobbs teaches in Ukraine

by Tim Nicholas, staff writer
MBCB

"When do you want us to go?" is the response Gene and Betty Dobbs, of Philadelphia, Miss., would make if given the opportunity to return to Ukraine for another volunteer stint.

Gene Dobbs, who retired two years ago as executive assistant for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, traveled with his wife Betty to Odessa last November to teach in the Odessa Theological Seminary.

"For me personally, it was the most rewarding experience I have had as a short-term mission volunteer," said Gene Dobbs.

For 48 hours — up to six hours at a time — Dobbs taught a group of ministers who for four years have returned to the seminary for two-week periods five times a year.

Working with experienced ministers, Dobbs dealt with background material in the course called, "New Testament Introduction and Survey."

"The joy was in investing 48 hours of my life in the lives of these men who are engaged in this struggle to bring the Gospel to their country which had been closed for 70 years," said Dobbs.

In addition, Dobbs preached in seven churches — three churches in one day.

Betty Dobbs spent time with seminary wives, often in their homes, sharing their common backgrounds as wives of ministers.

Betty told of her joy of being a pastor's wife for more than 40 years and that "God has something for each of them that no one else can do and God wants to use each one of them," she said.

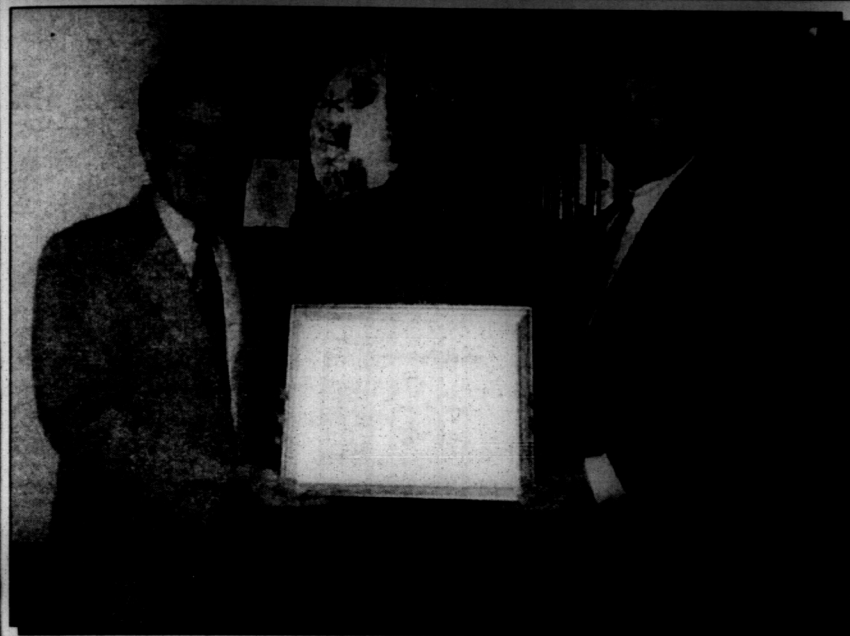
"They seemed so dedicated," said Betty. "To see them not having as many of the worldly goods as we have here and doing so much. It was a blessing to me."

The seminary has placed more than 500 trained leaders in churches across Ukraine.



Mississippi Baptist Partnership Missions is a supplement to The Baptist Record produced by the Office of Communication of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Contact Partnership Missions about future mission opportunities.
(800) 748-1651, ext. 398
(601) 292-3398
krhodes@mbcb.org

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Taylor, Richardson, and Keifer

Brian Richardson, pastor of Castlewoods Church, Brandon, was recently ordained to the ministry. Pictured (from left) are Jerry Taylor, deacon; Richardson; and Bob Keifer, deacon.

Bethel Church, Bogue Chitto, ordained Steve Rushing and Eric Malone as deacons on March 4. Pictured (from left) are Rushing; Terry J. Edwards, pastor; and Malone.



Rushing, Edwards, and Malone

HOMEcomings

Harmony (Carroll): April 29; 10:30 a.m.; dinner on the grounds; annual cemetery association business meeting; Ken Gower, pastor.

Goss, Columbia: April 29; worship, 11 a.m.; noon meal in Family Life Center; singing, 1 p.m.; Jerry Mixon, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, guest speaker; Diane Wilks, music; David Laird, pastor.

Adaton, Starkville: April 22; 10:30 a.m.; dinner in fellowship hall; Scott Cappleman, pastor.

Crowder, Crowder: April 22; 10:45 a.m. worship service followed by lunch; Jackie Cooke, guest speaker; Mike and Laurie Barham, music; Ben James, pastor.

Amaziah (Union): April 22-26; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m.; Bill Bozeman, Mobile, Ala., evangelist; Andy Roe, Memphis, Tenn., music; Leonard D. Howell, pastor.

REVIVAL DATES

Liberty (Mississippi): April 29-May 2; Sunday, 11 a.m., covered-dish lunch, and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; David Hamilton, Pontotoc, evangelist; Randy Wood, Verona, music; Martin Hayden, pastor.

New Hope, Coffeeville: April 18-20; 7 p.m.; Daniel Hathorne, Coffeeville, evangelist; Daniel Brown, New Hope Church, music; Billy Hill, pastor.

First, Orange Grove, Moss Point: April 15-18; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Don Savell, evangelist; Russell Hester, pastor.

Good Hope, Purvis: May 6-9; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; S. A. "Sonny" Adkins, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist; Phillip Willis, music; John E. Watts, pastor.

Calvary, Eupora: April 22-25; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Gary Permenter, Columbus, evangelist; Steve and Becky Carver, Mathiston, music; Marion M. Tumberlinson, pastor.

Bear Creek, McCool: April 22-25; 7 p.m.; Don Taylor, evangelist; Jill Furr, music; Mark Mayo, pastor.

Society Hill, Oakvale: April 22-25; 7 p.m.; Valton Douglas, evangelist; Mike Morris, music; L. C. Anthony, pastor.

REVIVAL 2001

April 22-25, 2001

SUNDAY SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY MUSIC LUNCH DAILY



Frank Harber Staff Evangelist, Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Ft. Worth, TX 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.	David Ring Evangelist, Franklin, TN 6:00 p.m.	Johnny M. Hunt Pastor, First Baptist Church, Woodstock, GA 7:00 p.m.	Fred Luter, Jr. Pastor, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, LA 7:00 p.m.	Ted H. Traylor Pastor, Olive Baptist Church, Pensacola, FL 7:00 pm	Pedro Linares Minister of Music, Carrollwood Baptist Church, Tampa, FL	Harold T. Bryson Professor of Christian Studies, Mississippi College Mon.-Wed., 12 noon Cost \$4 per person Reservations not required
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3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. *(I believe in Jesus.)*
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

REVIVE CONSERVATISM

Editor:

I have heard right-wingers say for years that liberals and communists agreed on most issues. Liberals claimed that right-wingers were just using smear tactics.

I wanted to find out for myself. So I took out a subscription to a communist publication for a year. I quickly found out that the political right was absolutely right.

Communists agree with liberals about the Confederate flag, the death penalty, abortion, affirmative action, and most other issues.

The funny thing is that many Christians actually agree with communists on the issues. It's time to revive the conservatism of the 1950s!

Randy Carpenter
Oxford

SHOULDN'T GET RICH

Editor:

I would like to take issue with the letter writer of March 8 who asserted that pastors of large churches and denominational leaders who make in the hundreds of thousands of dollars are entitled to do so because they "should receive a salary in line with other business leaders."

The hundreds of thousands of dollars thing is not a myth. I know of at least two Southern Baptist churches in one large city where I pastored whose pastors were making over \$100,000 a year. In fact, one was making over \$5,000 a week!

As a full-time pastor myself, I certainly agree that we should make a salary sufficient to support one's family in a decent manner. I do not agree that a religious leader should make himself rich off the Lord's work. Business leaders go into business to make all the money they can. Christian leaders should go into the ministry or denominational service primarily to try to reach all the souls they can. If one is drawing a salary in excess of what is necessary to meet his needs, he should ask himself if the extra money could be better used to reach the lost in some other manner.

Jesus twice drove "businessmen" from the Temple because they were using Temple worship to make themselves rich. I wonder — if Jesus were to enter one of our modern mega-churches, might the first thing he'd do be to make a scourge and drive some money-hungry preachers from the pulpit?

J.C. Brady, pastor
Shiloh Church
Port Gibson

SELECT WITH CAUTION

Editor:

In the spring of 2000, our church voted to have a pictorial

church directory made. We contracted with a company which, according to its advertising, specializes in such.

We have had the disappointing experience of discovering that not all companies live up to their agreements, not even those that claim to serve churches. Although we did finally receive the directories seven months after the photographing, the company accepted payment for portraits that were never produced. So far, this company has failed to respond to repeated appeals to rectify the matter.

If your church is considering a pictorial church directory, we

would like to warn you to be cautious in your selection of companies.

Wayne Campbell, pastor
Chunky Church, Chunky

Editor's note: For more information, contact Campbell at P.O. Box 146, Chunky, MS 39323. Telephone: (601) 655-8223.

THANKS, MISS. BAPTISTS

Editor:

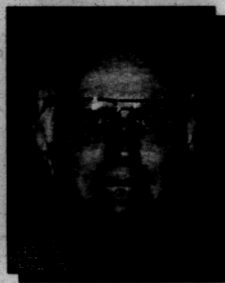
Let me on behalf of our Columbus community thank our Mississippi Baptist friends

continued on page 9

STAFF CHANGES

Lowrey Memorial Church, Blue Mountain, has called Tom

Sumrall as pastor effective March 4. Sumrall is a graduate of Louisiana College and New Orleans Seminary. He previously served as interim pastor at Salem Church, Raleigh.



Sumrall

Parkway Church, Houston, has called Ray Walker as minister of music effective March 4. Walker has served churches as minister of music for over 35 years. Gregg Thomas is pastor.

Jason Sebre has joined the staff of Castlewood Church, Brandon, as youth minister. Brian Richardson is pastor.



Sebre

Raymond Church, Raymond, extended a call to Mark Strum as pastor effective March 18. He previously served at First Church, Bastrop, La. A native of Columbia, Strum received his education at the University of Southern Mississippi and New Orleans Seminary.

Bay Vista Church, Biloxi, has called Kevin J. Clifton Jr., as

senior pastor, effective March 21. A native of Gulfport, Clifton received his education at Pearl River Junior College, University of Southern Mississippi, and is presently attending New Orleans Seminary. He previously served as pastor at Cane Creek Church, Perkinston, 1996-2000.



Clifton

Oak Forest Church, Jackson, has called Gary Blair

as pastor effective March 6. Blair, a native of Mississippi received his education at Grand Canyon University, Southwestern Seminary, and Trinity Theological Seminary. He has pastored churches in Texas, California, and Mississippi. He previously served Trinity Church, Southaven.



Blair

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, WEST POINT, MISS. is seeking God's selection as pastor. Please send resumes to: First Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 794, West Point, MS 39773.

CHURCH AVERAGING 100 IN SUNDAY SCHOOL seeks full-time or bi-vocational associate pastor/minister of music and youth. Please send resume to Calvary Baptist Church, 2878 Old Hwy 27, Vicksburg, MS 39180 or fax (601) 636-7574.

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continued from page 8

for the prayers, encouragement, and acts of help in the aftermath of the February storm. One statement seems to describe the storm from utility officials, government leaders, and citizens: "We have never seen such widespread damage." At one point all utilities were out. Three weeks later some still wait for electricity and telephones; for others it is a far off dream. More than 3,000 homes had damage.

Amazingly, there were no injuries. We give God glory for his care over us.

The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit was a welcome presence. Jim Didlake (Men's Ministry), Kay Cassibry (Woman's Missionary Union),

other convention staff, and the volunteers did a wonderful job of offering help and encouragement.

The cook and chainsaw crews cooperated beautifully with our local folks and did so much good.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for your wonderful help.

Bobby Douglas, pastor
First Church, Columbus

SEARCHING FOR PASTORS

Editor:

West End Baptist Church, Louisville, was organized 50 years ago on May 31, 1951, and we are planning a special service and celebration on June 3 at 2 p.m. We would like to locate as

many former pastors as possible. Anyone with information about past pastors, past pianists, history of the church, or has early pictures we could borrow, please call the church as soon as possible at (662) 773-8076 and leave your name and number and someone will call you back. In particular the pastors that have not been located are Lewis Byram (1954), Estes Denton (1956), B. W. Bridges (1960), C. H. Mills (1963), and David Bolin (1968).

Inez Dempsey
Louisville

MAN OF GOD SOUGHT

Editor:

Colonial Church of Randallstown, Md., is seeking a man of God who feels called to

pastor a multi-cultural church plant in nearby Owings Mills. Owings Mills is a suburb of Baltimore that is projected to grow from 17,000 in 1995 to 30,000 in the year 2010. Yet, there are almost no Bible-believing churches serving this community. Colonial is a Southern Baptist church committed to the task of racial reconciliation. Owings Mills' minority population (African American, Asian, and Hispanic) is approximately 32% of the community. Therefore, we believe a new work in this community should be one that can relate to all its residents.

Owings Mills Church Plant Committee

C/O Colonial Baptist Church
9411 Liberty Road
Randallstown, Maryland 21133



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS



Members of Reflections

Members of the Blue Mountain College Baptist Student Union Ensemble, Reflections, for 2001 include (pictured, from left) Katie Hewlett, Oxford; Kristy Brashier, Bartlett, Tenn.; Sarah Skillman, Red Banks; Allison Bell, Delray Beach, Fla.; and Lori Westbrook, Columbus. The Reflections group performs Christian music in an effort to share the Gospel and to lead in worship. The groups next performance will be at Springdale Church, Ripley, on April 29.

Blue Mountain College Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) Parliamentary Procedure team won first place at the PBL State

Leadership Conference held in Tupelo on March 22-24. The team will compete at the National Leadership Conference in Orlando, Fla., in July. Members of the team (pictured) are

Dot Jackson, PBL advisor and team coach; Deborah Chism; Sonia Jones; Brandie Johnson; and Leigh Trouard.

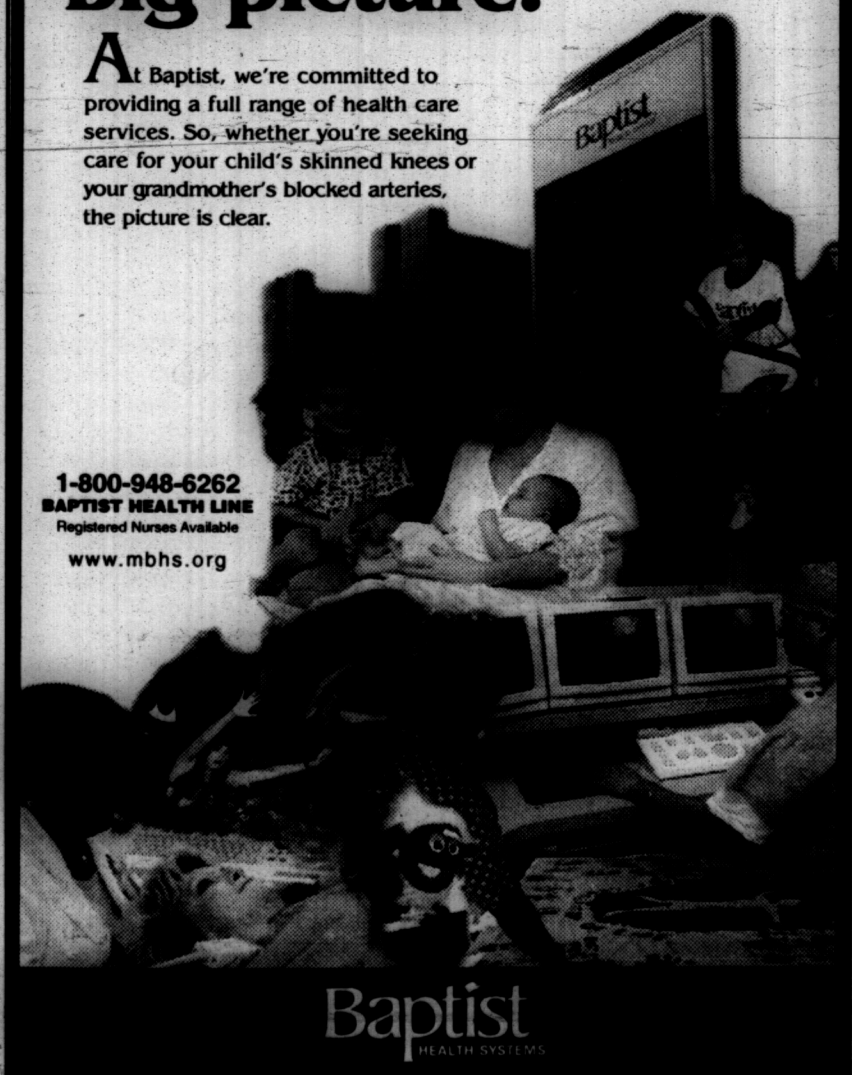


BMC Phi Beta Lambda Parliamentary Procedure team

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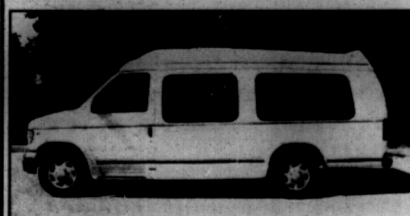
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David Eldridge of Clinton, a senior at Mississippi College (MC), is the recipient of the eighth annual Byrd Memorial Preaching Award. The award memorializes David Q. Byrd Sr., Maude Byrd, William Ashford Byrd, and Hal Newton Byrd. Members of the Byrd family were instrumental in the development of Clinton and MC and have been supporters of MC since 1930. Pictured (from left) are Harrell N. Byrd; Rosie Byrd; Eldridge; and Harold Bryson, chair of the Department of Christian Studies at MC.

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Kazakh lawmakers considering restrictions

ALTAMY, Kazakhstan (BP) — Ten years ago, when Southern Baptist representatives began reaching out to the traditionally Muslim people of Kazakhstan, no one knew how long the hearts of the people or the doors of the country would remain open to their witness.



ETERNITY AT STAKE — A fortune-teller on the streets of Almaty, Kazakhstan, prays a blessing on a customer. Many Kazakhs believe Christianity could threaten their Muslim traditions, which include veneration of ancestors. (BP photo)

Less than 10 Kazakhs claimed faith in Jesus, yet workers found hundreds and thousands ready to listen and learn.

Today, while hearts remain open, some Kazakhstan lawmakers appear ready to shut as many doors as possible to limit the

spread of evangelical Christianity. According to Keston News Service, the latest draft amendments to Kazakhstan's 1992 law on religion, if adopted and fully implemented, "will place the country among those former Soviet republics with the harshest climate for religious freedom."

As many as three different drafts of restrictive laws are being proposed, one by Kazakhstan's Ministry of Justice. "In this law that promises freedom of religion, what they are actually doing is promising freedom from religion," a Southern Baptist worker explained.

The two biggest restrictions are:

- an anti-proselytizing provision mak-

ing it illegal for any religious group to seek to convert anyone.

- a requirement that all religious meetings take place in facilities owned by the religious organization. In other words, no renting of facilities or meeting in a person's home would be allowed. This could stop churches from multiplying rapidly, since they would have to raise funds for buildings in order to reach status as official organizations.

Why the new restrictions? Some speculate Kazakhstan is guarding against Islamic fundamentalism, seeing it as a destabilizing force in a country that has enjoyed a peaceful eight years of freedom after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Ninel Fokina of Almaty Helsinki Committee told Keston News Service the second reason relates to Muslim and Russian Orthodox fears they are losing their flock and income to competing Protestants in this country of 14.9 million people located east of the Caspian Sea in Central Asia.

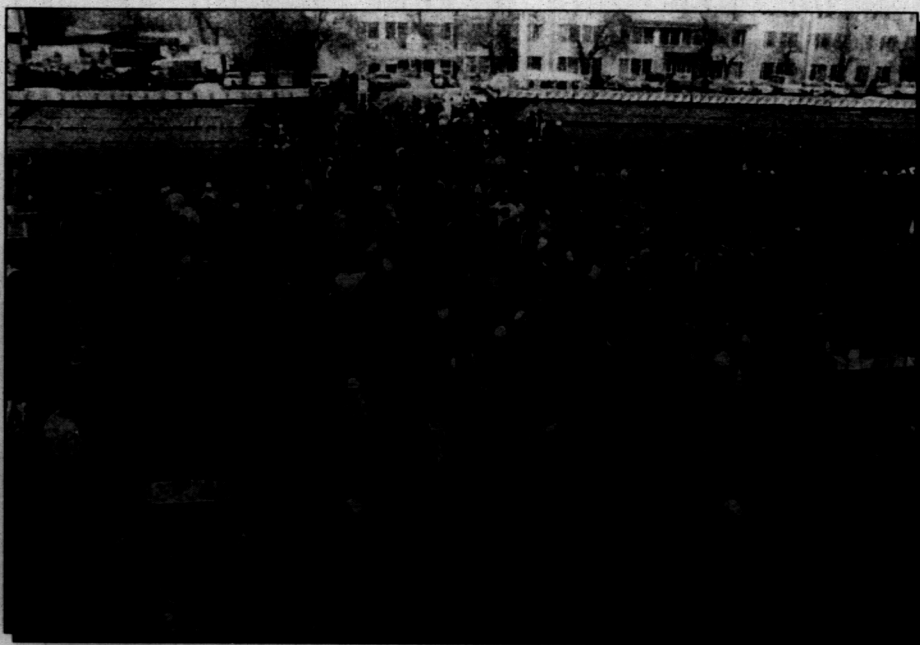
Southern Baptist representatives working in Kazakhstan, which is about one-third the size of the

United States and shares borders with both Russia and China, say they are not entirely surprised at this turn of events.

"With all of the things we have seen [God] do in our midst over the past few years, it should not surprise us that we are seeing forces rise up to oppose this significant work of God."

However, they aren't ready to pack their bags and pull out.

"We don't need to be sitting around wringing our hands wondering if we're going to still be around next year; we need to be acting and living like we will be here until death or until Jesus Christ returns..." one representative wrote to colleagues not long ago.



HELP FOR KAZAKHS — Unemployment is high in Kazakhstan and many, such as these Kazakhs doing shoe repair, find work any way they can. Southern Baptists have provided business training in addition to other humanitarian aid to Kazakhstan over the past 10 years. (BP photo)

Turkmenistan family pressed to convert to Islam

OXFORD, England (BP) — The wife and children of Baptist prisoner Shageldy Atakov in Turkmenistan have been told that they may not believe in Jesus Christ and must convert to Islam.

The pronouncement, by a local mullah, local government officials, and officers of the country's political police, the KNB, was passed on to Keston News Service by the German-based Friedensstimme mission.

Officials in the town of Kaakhka, close to Turkmenistan's southern border with Iran, also warned Atakov's wife, Artygyul, that the family home would be confiscated if Christians continue to meet there.

Keston has been unable to obtain the telephone numbers of the KNB, the mullah, and the local government administration in Kaakhka to ask why they are pressuring Artygyul Atakova and her children to convert from one faith to another.

According to the March 25 statement from local Baptists, a local policeman and a KNB officer visited the family on March 12, where the passport details of Artygyul and her five children were taken.

Then on March 14 a car with five officials arrived and took her to the local government administration headquarters, where the mullah, a lawyer, a district official, and a KNB officer named Narly (surname unknown) were already present, together with the director of studies of Kaakhka's school No. 12.

"They banned her from believing in Jesus Christ, forcing her to convert to the Muslim faith and insisting that she write a statement dictated by KNB officer Narly," the Baptists wrote. "They insisted she give

her children over to the school, where attention is mainly focused on reading the oath [of loyalty to the president and country] and kissing the flag."

They then issued the threat to confiscate her home if Baptists continue to meet there and to revoke the family's registration in the village.

Local Baptists are asking for prayer and appeals on the family's behalf. Artygyul Atakova and her five children have been left without a breadwinner since the arrest of her husband, Shageldy, in December 1998 for his activities with the Baptist church in the port city of Turkmenbashi.

He is serving a four-year sentence and since March 1 has been returned to a labor camp in Seydy in northeastern Turkmenistan after a time in a prison hospital.

He is currently in a punishment cell for one month.

The Atakovs' church — whose activities the Turkmen authorities claim are illegal — is a member of the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians/Baptists, which rejects registration in all the former Soviet republics where it operates.

Members of Turkmenistan's minority faiths are frequently pressured to convert to Islam.

LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

Does God ever view sex outside of marriage as okay? I am a teenager and I understand why it's important for me to abstain, but I worry about my dad who is divorced from my mom and dating.

Rather than worry for your dad, pray that he will be disciplined to seek the woman God has for him rather than "testing the water" with sex to see if they are compatible. For you and your dad, it is not a matter of "do's and don'ts" but of submission to God's direction and the search for ways to understand one another and be Christlike. Christ understands all that your father is going

through, for he was tested in all things. Your dad needs your prayers and support as well as your example to help him make the right decision.

Our son is a college student, and when he comes home on the weekends he does not want to abide by our 11:00 p.m. curfew. Any suggestions?

Your son has a lot of freedom at college and is learning how to organize his time. This is a good experience, but the difficulty comes when his world collides with yours. Speak openly and honestly about that collision and try to

work out an agreeable "win/win" solution. An example would be to acknowledge his independence as well as your need for respect from him. Let him know of your needs. A telephone call from him is a reasonable request. If he is not willing to abide by your wish, the weekend visitations may have to be limited. You are still experiencing his testing of the boundaries. You have to decide if this is a battle that is worth fighting. If so, then communication between you and your son is essential for understanding, respect, trust, and a deepening of your relationship as two adults.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. In central Mississippi, Ron Mumbower can be heard from 9-10 a.m. each Wednesday on WHJT-FM 93.5. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Confessing Christ

Matthew 16:13-28

By Lori Clendinning

In Matthew 16:13-28, Jesus asked some difficult questions of his disciples: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" and, more pointedly, "Who do you say I am?"

As natural spokesman for the group, Simon Peter's quick response to the latter question was: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Immediately following this confession, Jesus imparted a blessing to Peter, noting that this response was only revealed to him by his heavenly Father.

Following Jesus' resurrection and ascension, Peter dedicated his life as a faithful witness, declaring to all that Jesus is the Son of God. Eventually martyred by crucifixion for the cause of Christ, Peter requested that he be nailed to the cross in an upside-down position as an

act of humble devotion to his Lord.

Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ has not been the only one that resulted in loss of life. Others have willingly followed Jesus to their deaths, knowing that a more glorious reward awaited. Consider these two (excerpted from "God's Hall of Fame"):

JIM ELLIOT

In the mid 1950's Bible translator Jim Elliot went with his wife, Elisabeth, to South America to bring the gospel to Indian tribes. He greatly desired to reach the Aucas, a wild and savage tribe known for their killings and hostility toward white people. Jim and others began with flights over Auca territory, dropping gifts and making friendly overtures. Finally, in January, 1956,

Clendinning

wives via short-wave radio as they made their way into the Aucas jungle.

On the fifth day there was no further word. Fearing the worst, a search party was dispatched by the Air Force. Within days the truth was known: all five men were murdered by the Aucas; their speared bodies were found adrift in the Curaray River.

A statement Elliot wrote in college proved to be prophetic regarding the fact that he gave his mortal life for the sake of Christ: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

HENRY NEE

Born in 1903 to Chinese parents, Henry Nee was seventeen when he witnessed his moth-

er's rededication of her life to Christ. Shortly after, he accepted Jesus as Savior at an evangelistic meeting.

As is customary in Chinese culture, Henry chose a new name to symbolize the turning point in his life. No longer called Henry, he became "To-sheng," translated "Watchman."

Watchmen Nee felt called by God to act as spiritual guard for his Chinese countrymen and began to preach warnings to them of God's judgment even as he reminded them of God's great love.

Nee began to establish indigenous churches in China. He wrote books that focused on wholehearted devotion to God and his ministry flourished as he continued to serve God faithfully.

In 1952 the Chinese government imprisoned Nee for the crime of being a Christian. Yet, he began to touch even more lives for Christ than before. His books caught the world's attention and he reached legendary status as his life challenged western Christians to a deeper, more radical faith.

Watchman Nee died in a Shanghai prison following twenty years of imprisonment and torture. Before his death he wrote his sister: "God knows what He is doing and there is nothing accidental in the life of the believer. Nothing but good can come to those who are wholly His."

To be "wholly his" requires a commitment by believers to fully acknowledge Jesus as the one and only Savior and Lord. His desire for us is found in verses 24-26:

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? What can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Almighty God, may we this day die to the world to gain souls for You.

Clendinning is a former newspaper editor and a member of Park Place Church, Pearl.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

New life in Christ

John 20:1-31

By Jim Burnett

Have you stopped lately to consider the significance and impact of Easter morning? Had Jesus not rose from the grave, Christians would be facing at least four grim realities: 1) no promise of rapture; 2) no hope of a perfect and painless place called heaven; 3) no expectations of seeing Christian loved ones who have expired; and 4) no confirmation Jesus was truly the Lamb of God who took away our sins. Therefore, we would stand guilty before God and condemned to hell.

A new joy (20:11a, 16-18). As Mary stood outside the tomb of Jesus she was overcome with grief and sadness and wept. The only man, perhaps, who ever loved her unconditionally was now dead

and his body had disappeared. What would she do without him? Mary's sadness, however, quickly turned into joy as the living Lord called her name and sent her to tell the disciples the good news of his resurrection.

Can you remember back to the time when you had no relationship with Jesus, no forgiveness of sins, and no hope of heaven? Do you remember what it felt like to be lost and confused?

Words that describe this time in my life are joyless, purposeless, and hopeless. But then I met Jesus and he filled my life full of joy, purpose, and hope. Now I am totally fulfilled in serving my Lord.

Do you have the joy of the Lord in your heart? It comes

from knowing and obeying Jesus. The good news is God loves the world so much that he sent his son to die on a cross and rise from the grave to enable everyone who would receive him to experience new life and new joy.

A new purpose (20:19-23). Immediately upon Christ's death, the eleven headed for cover, thinking perhaps Jesus' fate would be their own if they remained in public view. Then the resurrected Lord entered the room where they were and declared, "Peace be with you." He showed them his hands and his side. After proving his victory over death, Jesus charged his disciples with the Great Commission, and pledged the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon them, which came at Pentecost.

Today we are Christ's disciples who have inherited the mission to save the lost and educate the saved. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we have the awesome

privilege and responsibility to share with our neighbors, our communities, and our country the good news that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

Do you feel responsibility for your lost family members, coworkers, and friends? Do the prospects of them spending eternity in hell haunt your soul? Time is running out, and people are slipping into a Christless inferno. Sound the alarm! Wake up, Church! Let us get busy telling people of our living Lord and Savior. It does not require a seminary degree, just a salvation experience.

One of the greatest joys of being a Christian is bringing others to faith in Christ. Every time a person is converted through my witness, for me, it is like being saved all over again. Soul winning requires people of faith bringing people to faith. Jesus called this fishing for men. How much fishing have you been doing for the Lord lately?

A new commitment (20:26-31). Often Thomas, the disciple, is criticized unjustly for

failing to believe the testimony of his fellow disciples about Jesus' resurrection. Let us remember he was the only disciple of the eleven absent upon Christ's resurrection appearance.

Eight days later, however, Jesus reappeared and allowed Thomas to not only see him but to touch him. Immediately Thomas responded, "My Lord and my God!" From Thomas' declaration of faith, I have a feeling his commitment to Christ from this day forward never waned. He became a powerful advocate for the Lord Jesus Christ and a profound mover and shaker for the kingdom of God. Thomas now had no doubt Jesus was alive. Do you?

If someone asked you to give evidence of Jesus' resurrection, could you? The greatest proof of Christ's resurrection is changed lives. Are you offering the world daily proof of Christ's victory over sin and the grave?

Burnett is pastor of Raymond Road Church, Jackson.

Guide to submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches at the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper, or (c) clearly printed on standard form provided by the newspaper. All articles must be submitted in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

THE BAPTIST

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting items is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not news-oriented will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Submit photos and digital pictures on a 3 1/2 inch floppy disk.

Woman's love hurdles cultural roadblocks

FESTUS, Mo. (BP) — When Betty Hayes walks into the foyer of Faith Church, one cannot help but notice her. Followed by a posse of Vietnamese children flocking

steadily into a full-fledged ministry of the church. Within the last two years, the church has begun holding Vietnamese worship services in the fellowship hall.

Hayes, a single woman in her 60s, is quick to point out the support the ministry receives from fellow members of the congregation, but there is no doubt that she is the ringleader behind the operation.

Whether giving rides to church for about five Vietnamese children or serving as a go-between for Vietnamese adults who speak little English and their doctors, Hayes keeps quite busy. She does it all without speaking a word of Vietnamese.

"The children speak English, so that helps," she said.

It all began in 1981 when Hayes agreed to take in an 8-year-old Vietnamese girl named Mia who needed a place to live. She lived with Hayes through college.

Hayes said it was an opportunity she couldn't pass up. "When the Lord puts something in front of us, we need to respond then, and he will multiply it," she said.

"When we respond to physical and emotional needs of people, then the Lord will open up doors for us."

Hayes, who also has two adopted children — Debbie MacKenzie and Jim Hayes, now both grown — has housed a half-dozen Vietnamese children through the years.

Mia now lives in Oklahoma. Currently, Hayes has legal custody of Bethany, a 9-year-old Vietnamese girl, and she takes care of a 15-year-old boy named David Nguyen.

"I didn't go out looking," she said. "The Lord just brought them here."

Though Hayes believes the Lord's work is being done through the ministry, she said the cultural differences make it difficult for her and others to share their faith. Because most Vietnamese have been raised in the Buddhist culture, making a profession of faith in Christ is not easy for them.

"It's not like witnessing to anyone else," she said. "They are open to all types of beliefs, but it's difficult to break through that wall."

Hayes said there are some Vietnamese like Mia who never did make a profession of faith. She still talks regularly to Mia. "I keep praying for her, but it can be heartbreaking."

For a long time, Vietnamese people would come to church with Hayes every Sunday despite their inability to understand the sermon. Mark McGee, who assists with the ministry, said, "For so many years, they would come just out of respect for Betty. The core of the ministry is relationships, along with a trust in Betty."

Just within the last two years, Faith Church has begun to see more cultural barriers broken down through the Vietnamese services Hayes and others helped start.

Every other Sunday, the church holds a service specifically for the Vietnamese in the fellowship hall. Ban Le, pastor of Emmanuel Vietnamese Church, St. Louis, leads the service.

On other Sundays, Vietnamese members attend the church's regular service and use headphones to listen to tapes of Ban Le's sermon during the service.

"There were times that I wanted to witness to them, and I couldn't do it because of the language barrier," Hayes said.

"It takes time," she pointed out.



ROOM IN HER HEART — Betty Hayes of Festus, Mo., has been opening her heart in a special way to Vietnamese youth for more than 20 years. (BP photo)

around her like chicks following their mother hen, Hayes makes her way through the building.

Everything around her whirls at a rapid pace. Looking a little exhausted at first, she quickly perks up when asked about her Vietnamese friends.

For the past 20 years, relationships between Hayes and the Vietnamese in Festus, Mo., have matured slowly but

Paralyzed pastor discovers God's promises are true

PIEDMONT, Okla. (BP) — There are a lot of "ifs" in this world — many of which have weighed heavily on Randy McCown the last few months.

If the waders had not sprung a leak. If the steps hadn't been wet. If he had not been barefooted. If he had not been in such a hurry. If doctors had ordered an early MRI.

If any of these things had occurred differently, McCown might not be spending his days in a wheelchair paralyzed from the chest down. On the other hand, if his accident had not happened, perhaps his niece would not be a Christian today.

Maybe one of the nurses who took care of him in the hospital, who had given up on God, would not be active in church today, and taking friends to church with her.

Perhaps those who attended Sunday evening services at the hospital led by McCown would not have been touched.

Most important of all, maybe McCown would not have realized fully that what he's preached for 22 years really is true.

When he went to First Church, Wetumka, he discovered his best friend from high school whom he had not seen since graduation and his wife were attending the church. She was a Christian, but he was not.

McCown had the privilege of leading his high school friend to Christ. Then came the bittersweet moment when McCown was to baptize his old friend.

It was his 44th birthday: May 7, 2000. Things were done a little differently on this day because McCown's waders had sprung a leak, so he entered the baptistry barefooted.

As he was coming out of the baptistry, the steps were wet and he was in a hurry. His feet came out from under him, and he landed on his back and neck.

"It took me about 15 minutes to get back on my feet, and although I was in

pain, I preached that morning," McCown recounted. The next day, McCown went to the doctor, who took X-rays, determined



OUTLOOK BRIGHT — Randy McCown has reason to smile these days. After doctors told him he would never walk again following a fall in the baptistry, less than six months later he is able to lift his left foot off the ground. (BP photo)

nothing was broken, and put him in physical therapy and on steroids.

In June, First Church, Piedmont, Okla., extended a call to McCown to become associate pastor. Then on Aug. 25, he said he woke up with pain so intense he thought he was going to die.

From the results of an MRI, doctors discovered that a blood clot had formed from McCown's fall in the baptistry. The pain, they said, was caused from the clot moving up the spinal cord. When it closed off the spinal cord, it paralyzed him.

"That was a time of discovering that what you've known and believed in your heart to be true really is real," McCown said. "God is faithful."

McCown said he had many opportunities to share the love and goodness of Christ while lying flat on his back.

"The accident was worth it to be able to witness to my niece I've been praying for for years," McCown said. "As she was sitting in my room, I led her to Christ. She has been baptized and is going to church."

God gave him opportunities to witness to nurses and orderlies, McCown noted.

"One young lady, who took care of me a couple of nights, said she had given up on God," McCown said. "We visited, and I didn't see her for three weeks."

"When she came back, she told me she was going to church again with a girlfriend and they were taking another friend with them."

As McCown began to feel better, he started Sunday night services in the hospital dining hall. "God was able to touch people through that," he said.

"This isn't about me, but about God and his faithfulness," McCown said. "It's about discovering what you've preached for 22 years really is true."

Bibliocipher

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CPF CDTJCO UCKF, OA
UQP, IQF YKNN RTQXKFG
JKOUGNH C NCOD HQT
C DWTPV QHHGTPKI: UQ
VJGA YGPV DQVJ QH
VJGO VQIGVJGT.

IGPGUKU VYGPVA-VYQ:

GKIJV

Clue: I = G

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Three Eight: Twenty-Six.